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Lifting Up... September 2012



Rev. Dr. Richard W. Sales Remembered
 by Tim Downs

We have shared with you the news of the death of Richard W. (Dick) Sales on August 30. Dick died following a fall that resulted in severe injury to his brain. The Southeast Conference UCC both mourns Dick's death, and celebrates with gratitude his life and ministry. We remember him as our first associate conference minister for theological education. Dick is the founder and "father" of TAP (Theological Among the People). His gifts and genius as an educator brought us a system which made theological education available not only to the pews, but to the ministers who did not have easy access to traditional theological training in preparation for ministry.



Born on September 16, 1931, in Syracuse, NY, Dick was the son of Mark Bishop Sales, Sr. and Evelyn Lillian Reichert. Dick is survived by his wife Nancy, brother Mark, and children, Mark, Anne and James. He was the grandfather of three.

He graduated from Oberlin College in 1953, received a MDiv. from Chicago Theological Seminary in 1956, and in 1973 a Th.D. also from Chicago Theological Seminary. Dick and his first wife Jane Magorian were appointed by the United Church Board of World Ministries to serve in South Africa in 1957, where they worked until 1971. Their visas to return to South Africa were denied, and they returned instead to the Republic of Botswana in 1974, where Jane died that year.

Dick married Nancy Magorian in 1975 and they worked with the UCBWM in Botswana and Zambia, where Dick developed a program: Theological Education by Extension. TEE has educated an estimated 15,000 church leaders in these nations over the course of two generations.

In 1986 Dick and Nancy returned to the United States and he served with the Christian Council of Metropolitan Atlanta, then as an interim minister at Pilgrim Congregational UCC, Birmingham, and as interim at Pilgrim Congregational UCC, Chattanooga. In 1988 he accepted a call as pastor of Pilgrim Congregational UCC, Birmingham, where he served until 1997. In 1997 he accepted a call to serve as the Associate Conference Minister for Theological Education of the Southeast Conference. In that position Dick developed the TAP program, extending it to every church of the Conference which could gather five people for a three year course of study. It was under his guidance that Kathy Clark began to work with TAP in the Southeast Conference.



UCC News

UCC Newsroom

Headlines from the United Church of Christ

Ohio UCC congregation kicks off centennial celebration with \$10K collection

To kick off the celebration of its centennial anniversary, the congregation of East View UCC in Shaker Heights, Ohio, set an ambitious goal, pledging to collect \$10,000 in the offering on Sunday. Together, members met that pledge, starting a fund for improving the building they've called home.



Southeast Conference FAQ's

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IAP, and ultimately succeeded Dick as its director.

The United Church of Christ and our partner denominations in Southern Africa owe Dick and Nancy a deep debt of thanks for their vision and teachings which have transformed the church of Jesus Christ. We are diminished by Dick's death, but have all been immeasurably enriched by his gifts and his love for the United Church of Christ. Dick and Nancy were able to be with us on August 25 for a celebration of the thirteen year ministry of Kathy Clark with the Southeast Conference. Kathy prepares to move to her new position in the national setting of the UCC. At that reception Dick Sales was recognized as a pioneer in the field of theological education by extension, and as the founder of TAP, a program which has now evolved into the PATHWAYS program.

The memorial service for Dick will take place on Sunday, September 23, at the First Congregational UCC (1024 Center Street, North, Birmingham, AL 35204-3245).

In lieu of flowers gifts may be made to:

Greater Birmingham Ministries (www.gbm.org)

Magic City Harvest (www.magiccityharvest.org)

Global Ministries (www.globalministries.org)

Reflection on the :Life of Richard W. Sales

by Michael Stroud



Of the missionaries sent abroad over the generations by the UCC and its predecessors, Dick Sales had one of the greatest impacts upon the vitality of the mission of the churches in Southern Africa. Today, our partner churches in

South Africa, Botswana, and Zambia report that over 15,000 indigenous leaders have been trained to serve them. That in and of itself would be sufficient testimony of a remarkable ministry.

The Southeast Conference has for years sought to meet the needs of its ministers who have lacked opportunities or resources to prepare for ministry through traditional seminary education. Many of our smaller congregations found pastors ordained in other traditions, or ministers training in non-traditional programs such as that at LaGrange College in Georgia in the 1970's. Dick's commitment to theological education by extension (TEE), shaped by his ministry in Southern Africa, came in time to provide the Southeast Conference a way to meet these critical needs for an educated ministry.

Returning from Africa in 1986 and working with the Christian Council of Atlanta, Dick began implementing a TEE program in the Atlanta area. He subsequently served several UCC local church pastorates, yet throughout, Dick still aspired to bring TEE to the American South. The Alabama-Northwest Florida Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), ecumenical partners to the UCC, first engaged Dick to design and implement a several-course program of study and

discussion, named PEPP.

In 1997, the Southeast Conference called Dick to begin organizing the Theology Among the People program (TAP). I was among Dick’s first students in 1999 not long after I joined the United Church of Huntsville UCC, Alabama. I worked with two other members of the church to address the congregation’s needs for Christian education. TAP was an important part of strengthening the relationship between the United Church and the UCC.

I saw TAP, much as I see its online successor PATHWAYS, as the Conference’s way of meeting the need for trained ministers as well as equipping lay people for effective and theological grounded leadership in the church. These gifts are essential for a well informed and knowledgeable leadership in the church. TAP and PATHWAYS have been our Conference’s way of bringing excellent affordable and accessible theological training into each of our congregations. TAP has transformed the lives of many of the churches across the Conference, shaping their leadership and strengthening their relationship with the ministry and mission of the United Church of Christ. PATHWAYS promises to take this transformation to churches across the entire UCC. The gifts of Dick Sales are woven into the lives of both TAP and PATHWAYS.

Dick leaves us with a witness and ministry that has truly been a testimony to the Reformed principle of the priesthood of all believers. He will be missed but his legacy continues to be an inspiration. I join with all of those who have been touched by Dick’s life and ministry in saying, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	1	2	3

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